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SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS,

IN A SERIES OF

FAMILIAR LECTURES,

BY A PASTOR.

—“He shall be faithful in teaching.”—

BOSTON:
JAMES MUNROE AND COMPANY.
1840.

S.S.

823 Fox

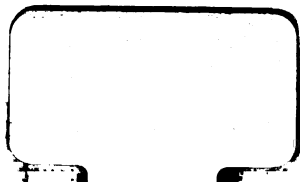


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Prof. ANDREW PRESTON PEABODY, D.D.

2 November 1893.



HINTS
TO
SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS,
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FAMILIAR LECTURES.

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From the Library of
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DEDICATION.

TO THE PAST AND PRESENT TEACHERS OF HIS
SUNDAY SCHOOL, WITH GRATITUDE FOR THEIR AID
AND CO-OPERATION IN THE RELIGIOUS INSTRU-
CTION OF THE CHILDREN OF HIS SOCIETY, THIS LIT-
TLE WORK, ORIGINALLY PREPARED FOR THEIR
BENEFIT, IS PRESENTED BY THEIR FRIEND AND
PASTOR,

THE AUTHOR.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The following Lectures were hastily written out from recollections of remarks made to a circle of teachers, and originally appeared in the *Sunday School Teacher*. They are republished at the suggestion of friends, in the hope of furnishing, in a cheap form, some aid to those engaged in the religious culture of the young.

Newburyport, April 15, 1840.

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HINTS

TO

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS.

LECTURE I.

Teachers the school—Design of Sunday schools and objections to them answered—Other schools not to be blindly copied—What teachers are to do.

"The teachers are the school." If it be a good school, it will, under God, be made so by their fidelity, zeal and devotedness. Worldly and negligent, cold and impatient instructors can for the most part have only careless, irreverent and ungovernable pupils. Whereas, a body of teachers who have caught something of the spirit of Jesus, his earnest love for the soul, his patience and strong sense of duty, his spirituality and abiding persuasion, that moral goodness is of infinite value and the "one thing needful," will receive the blessing of heaven and find their work abundantly prospered. In after life providence may, in mercy, counteract the bad influences to which the young have been exposed on account of the errors or the unfaithfulness of the

teachers of their childhood. But still the character of those who undertake the charge of a Sunday school must necessarily determine, to a great extent, the good or evil effects of that school on the children of whom it is composed. For this reason, I have thought it might be well, to give a short course of familiar lectures on the Sunday school—the qualifications of teachers—the nature of the child—the modes of instruction, and in short, most of those topics which require our serious consideration and study. My remarks will be desultory, and little more than mere hints. Yet I hope to be able to say something which we may turn to account in the discharge of our interesting and responsible duties. I shall begin by speaking briefly of the design of the Sunday school.

It will not be necessary for me to trace the history of the Sunday school. You are all aware that it had its origin in efforts made by Robert Raikes and others, to collect and instruct the children of the poor and vicious. From these efforts has grown up that institution, which is now so universal that hardly a religious society in any protestant denomination, is without a branch of it. The design of all Sunday schools, may, in general terms, be said to be, the moral and religious education and improvement of the young; a design that commends itself at once to the heart of every christian philanthropist, and enlists in its favor, his prayers and his labors.

There are, however, those who doubt the utility of Sunday schools to accomplish what they

propose. The objections urged by such persons, I shall not stop to examine at length; for, on a little reflection, they will be found not to lie against the institution, but the manner in which it may, in certain cases, be conducted—in other words, not against its use, but its abuse. I admit—and it is well that we should ever bear the fact in mind—I admit there are dangers connected even with Sunday schools. They *may* be too much relied on. They *may* be nurseries of sectarianism. They *may* make parents forgetful of their responsibility to their offspring. They *may* deal too much with the head, and too little with the heart. A school, wherein children are led by authority to embrace a particular creed; a school, concerning whose efficacy extravagant promises and unqualified language are indulged, a school, the teachers of which have not constant intercourse with the parents of their scholars; a school, wherein the mere letter of the New Testament is taught; or instruction is given in a cold, heartless and formal way, may and doubtless will do more harm than good, be a curse, instead of a blessing. Yet this need not, and cannot be said of a school properly managed. Let teachers enter upon their work with a warm zeal and rational expectations; let them aim to make their children good; let them reverence the right of each soul to freedom in the study of religion; let them strive to obtain the co-operation of parents; let them, in fine, feel that theirs is an office which requires zeal and circumspection, earnestness and patience, fervor and industry,

enlightened minds and warm hearts, let the teachers feel this, and they need not fear that the most sceptical will look on with coldness or call in question the value of their ministry.

I have said that I admit there are dangers connected with the Sunday school ; but I have also contended that they are neither necessary nor unavoidable ; and therefore we need not dwell upon them, any farther than to see and avoid them. The best way to silence all objections is to be faithful. Our school will be whatever we choose to make it. It is not then important that we should enter into an argument of words to prove its utility ; but rather give our strength to the formation of that argument of works and facts that cannot be resisted.

I would not advise you to look at other schools in order to copy them slavishly ; or, if I may be allowed the expression, to learn and adopt the fashions that may prevail among them. While we ought, doubtless, to be ready to profit by the example of others when convinced that it is good ; yet, after all, it is best by deep thought, wakeful vigilance, careful experiment and untiring exertion, to endeavor to build up our own school independently, according to the dictates of a true philosophy of human nature, and in the comprehensive spirit of uncorrupt christianity. I would have you free. I pray you to be diligent, active in the acquisition of all, from whatever quarter it shall come, that may aid you in your office. But at the same time, I also pray you, beware how you follow any counsel blindly.

And this caution I ask you to exercise, in receiving my remarks. Believe nothing merely because I say it, do nothing merely because I advise it. But ponder my words and examine my suggestions. If they approve themselves to your judgments and you deem them, sound then receive and act upon them: but not otherwise. To say all, in a word, let us go to our duties in our school, impressed with the truth that it is for us to give it a character that shall make it an instrument of good and obtain for it the favorable regard of the religious and the intelligent.

I have adverted to the design of Sunday schools in general. Let me ask next, and more in detail; what should be the object in carrying on the one with which we are connected? We have connected with it, a certain number of boys and girls. What do we wish to do with them or for them? To *make* them good, religious? No; at least not in the strict and literal sense of the phrase. *That* is not in our power. Virtue is not to be poured into the soul like water into a cup: or stamped upon the heart as with a seal. christian character cannot be given, or put on like a garment. Education, in all its branches, is developement and not filling up; a growth and not a fabric. The spirit must exert itself and by its own action become wise, strong and sure. The only true education is self-education. I am not here objecting to mere phraseology. In the religious culture of the young, it is quite a common mistake to suppose that the moral graces are to be taught. Parents and teachers too frequent-

ly forget that it is only by being good, that we apprehend goodness. The great fundamental truth, is, "whosoever will do his will shall know of the doctrine." I return then to the question, What are we to do for the children under our care? And I reply, we are to *help* them to fulfil the purpose of their creation, the end of their being; *help* them to become children of our Father in heaven. They are souls, made to think, will, feel, desire and love; they are immortal; they are images of God; they are to grow perfect and to find bliss, as they are redeemed or preserved from sin and ignorance, and grow into harmony with the Infinite One. To do this, they must know themselves; they must know the relations they sustain to their brethren, and to the works and providence of their Maker; they must know the religion of Jesus. Our duty is, to aid them in getting this knowledge. The Sunday school teacher is to do what he can to reveal the child's spirit unto itself, to unseal its eye to the beauties and glories and signification of the outward universe, to assist it in its efforts to understand and feel the truth and loveliness of christianity as taught in the words, and still more in the character of Christ. It is our duty and our privilege to endeavor to awaken our pupils to the true and the eternal life. This is the work given us to do. What preparation our mission requires, and how we can best perform it, are subjects next to be considered.

LECTURE II.

Qualifications of Teachers.—1. They must undertake their work as a privilege, and from a sense of duty.—Excuses.
—2. A trustful and hopeful spirit.—Causes of despondency.

My next topic is the *qualifications* of teachers. Before I take it up let me premise one or two remarks. 1. In this discussion I shall assume that we are all beginners, and make no apology for seeming to overlook the long experience and the success of any of my readers. 2. I shall not study a very philosophical or logical arrangement, but treat of individual qualities as they may occur to my mind. 3. I shall put the standard high, not with the expectation that we can reach it at once, but in obedience to the truth, that the higher the aim, the stronger the endeavor and the greater the success.

I. The question that meets us at the outset is; "With what view and from what motive are we to enter the office of teachers?" I answer, we should enter it,—*as a privilege, and from a sense of duty*. Some, it may be, go into the Sunday school, because it is the fashion, or because their friends and companions are there, or because, being urged, they are unwilling to decline. With regard to teachers, thus seduced to

the work by improper considerations, or driven to it by the mistaken zeal of others, permit me to say, the sooner they undergo an entire change of purpose, or else resign their place, the better. The great reason why we should become teachers is to be found in the relation we hold to the young. To exert, to the extent of our ability, a good moral influence, to communicate truth and awaken in others a love of virtue, whenever and wherever we can, is a commandment written in the constitution of our natures, as well as on the page of revelation. Children are near us,—within our reach; we have the opportunity to aid their moral growth; in this fact, is to be heard the call for our services. Believing, as I said, that the worth of the Sunday school depends directly, and almost exclusively, upon the character of its teachers, I think great caution ought to be exercised in regard to the feelings and purposes with which those teachers go to their labors. Were I inviting a person to take a class, I would not dwell much upon the example of others, the popularity of the station, or the pleasures it might afford. That crowds are toiling in a particular field, is, to some extent, certainly an argument for joining them; the high favor enjoyed by the Sunday school shows, without doubt, that it is a promising sphere of usefulness; and that the faithful teacher gathers rich reward, as he goes along, is highly probable. Still these are not the chief inducements I would hold out. I prefer to appeal at once to the sense of duty, and dwell upon the fact

that *here* is an *opportunity*, and that we are bound to do good "as we have opportunity." Such a course would be most honest, and, in the end, would be found the best policy. A recruit, gained by such an application, would be a fellow-laborer not easily daunted. His motive would keep him on his post and hopeful, when others are leaving with the sigh of despondency, or in the gloom of disappointment. Besides, it is not true, that brightness is ever on the path of the teacher, any more than it is ever on the path of other mortals. Those trials of faith, patience and love, which all endure, and by which, rightly improved, all are to be made better, belong to his lot, as they belong to the lot of every man. He needs, therefore, to begin and continue his efforts to do good, because it is his privilege and his duty.

But these sentiments are not responded to by many. When seeking teachers, we are met by excuses not a few; and as we have to exert ourselves, to fill the vacancies which necessarily occur from time to time in our little band, it may be well to examine, for a moment, these excuses. They all of them avow a *want*,—a want of time, a want of knowledge, or what is still worse, and perhaps most common, a want of inclination. Now such apologies evince a great disregard of duty, and argue a sad mal-arrangement of life. They are no farther of weight, as reasons for neglecting the Sunday school, than they are of weight as reasons for neglecting the most solemn business of exis-

tence. They go upon the false assumption that in order to be teachers, we need to be or to do something from which we should otherwise be exempted. But the truth is, we are called upon to do but little, if any, more, to fit ourselves for the Sunday school, than we are to be men and christians. He, consequently, to whom we may, with reason and propriety, apply for assistance, and who declines complying with our request, is trying to avoid the very purpose of his creation.

This remark may seem too strong; for the view here taken is not often presented. But it is none the less just on that account; and a little thought will satisfy you of its correctness. Consider, for a moment, what is required of a teacher. To rule and educate his own spirit, to study the scriptures, to think much of things unseen and eternal, to cultivate his intellect and improve the heart, to be ready to toil for the good of others, in short, to be a christian. Now is not all this obligatory upon every one? Can it ever be neglected with impunity? Does it not constitute our duty as followers of Christ, —nay, as moral and accountable beings? Let me be understood here. I do not mean to say, because that which is required of us as teachers is also required of us as men, all are therefore under an obligation to become teachers. Many, for various and obvious reasons, may be excused from this particular office in the church. All I contend for, is, that those unto whom, every fair allowance being made, we may justly look

for aid in the Sunday school, cannot, in general, refuse their co-operation, unless quite insensible to their first and highest duties. If they plead want of time, knowledge, inclination, do they not thereby confess themselves careless about the welfare of the soul ?

From what I have said, it seems, that but little new duty, so to speak, is imposed upon the teacher, and that he assumes hardly any obligation, which, were he not a teacher, he might disregard ; the time actually employed in the Sunday school being nearly the whole of the additional demand made upon him. And here, I may add, that the amount of time which a good degree of fidelity would ask, is often exaggerated. To spend an hour profitably with a class, does not require great preparation. Let the teacher be alive to his work, let him set apart each day a few moments, or on Saturday or Sunday evening devote a longer period, to such reading, thought, and other exercises, as may fit him for an interview with his scholars, and he will find himself furnished for his task. Besides, there are various offices in a Sunday school ; and all are not equally arduous. There is room, therefore, for the services of those who can do but little, as well as for the services of those who can do much.

Having thus shown the unsoundness of the excuses generally made by those who ought, but yet are unwilling to be laborers in the Sunday school, I name as another qualification of the teacher :—

II. *A trustful and hopeful spirit.* Teachers frequently, and occasionally perhaps with reason, grow faint and weary, and are anxious to abandon their places. They are, like all who endeavor to improve the moral and religious condition of man, liable to the weakness of thinking, at times, their labor is in vain. The best way to furnish a medicine for this too common indisposition; and thereby to re-animate the expiring faith and zeal of the despondent; will be to point out its causes. I suppose the teacher is in danger of becoming dissatisfied with his work, either because he forgets the object of the Sunday school, or because his own ideas of the amount of success he may reasonably anticipate are indefinite, or because he has not duly reflected upon the nature of moral influence.

1. The teacher forgets the object of the Sunday school. He meets with rudeness, perverseness, obstinacy, wickedness, in his scholars; they are not so docile, orderly, attentive as he could wish; and when this happens he is desirous of leaving them as incorrigible. Now such a desire shows that he has not a distinct conception of his duty. His complaint—put into plain language—is, that the children are not quite or almost perfect. This is to be lamented, but not wondered at. If they were perfect, they would need but little of our services. To correct faults of character is our business. We must expect, in some cases, to meet with bad habits and vicious propensities, and endeavor, by patient and long-continued toil, to destroy them; and for a

teacher to give their appearance as a reason for quitting his class, is about as agreeable to the dictates of truth and duty, as for a minister to cease preaching repentance, because the world is so sinful. It is a part of the teacher's mission to seek and save *the lost*.

2. The teacher desponds, again, because his own ideas of the amount of success he may reasonably anticipate, are indefinite. When we take a class we ought to examine it with care, study the condition in life of its members, the circumstances by which they are surrounded, and then ask how much we can hope to accomplish? It is folly to weep because we cannot do all we may desire. Our exertions are but one among a thousand influences which bear upon our pupils. They are not exclusively, they are only partially, and for short seasons, under our control. Instead, therefore, of looking too anxiously for results, instead of depending upon visible success for our encouragement, let us be most solicitous, calmly and steadily to do our duty, having faith in that overruling providence which will not allow a single good seed, sown in sincerity, to perish or be overrun with weeds.

3. The teacher desponds, once more, because he has not duly reflected upon the nature of moral influence. The consequences of that influence, will, for the most part, be invisible. He may not be permitted to see much, certainly not the whole, of the good he may do. He cannot follow the child home, be with him on the play-ground;

go with him up to manhood and into all the relations of life, and mark where and to how great an extent his instructions affect his character and his doings. The good word is spoken, the truth imparted, but years may roll away before it bears a blossom, and ages before it brings forth the ripe fruit. Think for a moment how a character is formed. It is the workmanship of agents, exercises, influences and circumstances, which no man can count. A host of ministers are laboring with us, some wisely and others wickedly, some for good and others for evil. In a process so complicated, are we to be astonished that we cannot follow our agency from its commencement, and through all its stages, to the final result? You may not help a child to be perfect; but were it not for your care how much darker might be the color of his after-life. You may not perceive a rapid improvement in your pupils; but long after you have left this world, they may be calling you blessed for your labors in their behalf. I might strengthen these observations by anecdotes, but it is not necessary. We may find their confirmation in our own experience. We can all, doubtless, trace to some careless word, some single remark or act, spoken or done by the friends of our youth, important features in our characters. The fact is, that at the moment we communicate a truth, the soul to whom it is addressed may not be in a fit state to receive or apply it to practice. Our instructions are frequently like some seeds, in which the principle of vitality slumbers so long that they seem

dead ; but after a long time, it may be, the dews of heaven and the warm rays of the sun fall on them and they grow and bring forth fruit, some twenty, some fifty, and some an hundred fold. The teachings of the faithful instructor, are a part of the material out of which is wrought, by the mysterious machinery of life, the characters of his scholars. He may not see them interweaving themselves among the hints, suggestions, and impressions obtained from other sources, but they are busy furnishing their threads and giving beauty and strength to the fabric. Carry the smallest taper into an illuminated hall and it increases the general brilliancy of the apartment, although you strive in vain to separate its particular rays from those shed abroad by the multitude of blazing lamps. So it is with moral influence. It is never lost ; notwithstanding its instrumentality is unseen. It is never lost ; notwithstanding you can neither tell where it takes effect, or where it comes into use. Sunday school teachers should therefore have the wisdom of hope and the patience of faith.

These imperfect thoughts on the causes of despondency in teachers, are by no means a full discussion of the subject. I offer them only that you may ponder and follow them out. If you will do this, I think you will confess, that we have less to warrant that weariness in well-doing, the best instructors sometimes experience, than we are wont to suppose.

Before I conclude, there is one other thought to be added. When teachers lose their interest

in their vocation, or are oppressed by its difficulties, the fault is, sometimes, almost wholly in themselves, and indicates the coming on of lukewarmness and indifference to religion. They have, unconsciously, grown worldly ; lost something of their spiritual-mindedness ; their hearts have become cold, and their affections are beginning to be weaned from God and goodness. It will be safe, therefore, always to inquire, first, when our path seems rough, blocked up, or gloomy, whether the light that is within be not darkened ; whether the fire on the heart's altar be not burning dim and low. How often will honest self-examination force the minister of Christ, whether he labor in the pulpit or in the Sunday school to confess, that were he a better and more consistent christian, his difficulties and embarrassments would vanish. In the moral, if not in the natural world, *faith* will remove mountains.

LECTURE III.

Qualifications of Teachers continued.—3. Reverence for the soul.—What is a child?—4. The habit of observing children.

III. I NAME *reverence for the soul* as another qualification of the teacher. By this I mean a sober and wise reverence: a reverence not inspired merely, by eloquent, but general remarks, on the worth of the spirit, but a reverence resulting from our own study of human nature. It is possible to dwell upon the dignity of the soul, without feeling it, to eulogize its greatness in words, without recognizing its greatness in our practice. We must discover for ourselves the indications of a high destiny, the image of God in man, before we shall truly honor him. I make this remark, because we are frequently in danger of assenting with emotion to a truth earnestly set forth in glowing language, while we fail to remember that truth in the every day affairs of life, and in the discharge of duties, highly important, but destitute, it may be of the brilliant and attractive colors of poetry or the imagination. It is easy to admit that man is a noble being, when Milton is adduced as an example,

and still turn away from a child clad in the rags of poverty. I do not therefore ask of the teacher that sort of sentimental regard for human nature, obtained from the glowing pages of books or essays, which will but poorly bear the realities of life. I speak rather of a calm, clear, rational, habitual persuasion of the worth of the soul, produced by the study of our own consciousness, and of man as he is, independent on external circumstances, and which enables us at all times to look through the robe of flesh and see first the living and immortal spirit. The reverence we need, is that which will come from deep and right reflection on the humblest and poorest infant that breathes. Let the teacher enter the hovel, take the child, from which mere sensibility would turn away with disgust, let him gaze steadfastly and long upon that child, and by the light shed out from his own mind, go through the chambers of the young soul, explore the recesses of the young heart, examine all the capabilities and attributes of an immortal being even in its infancy, and then he will have a true and abiding conviction, that before him, however to common eyes, apparently degraded, is a work of God, to be loved and honored. General descriptions, to be of any avail, must be authenticated and made operative by bringing them down and regarding them as true portraits of individual cases. As the sculptor sees in the rough and unhewn block of marble the future statue of surpassing beauty, so must the teacher see in the saddest forms of humanity the germs of angelic perfection. It is not enough to admit

the dignity of human nature, when speaking of the race ; we must admit it also, when in direct contact with individuals. It is not enough that we believe spirit, in the abstract, to be immortal ; we must believe also, that the shivering applicant for charity, the ill-clad pupil that comes each week into our class, is never to die ; and this very contrast between his rank in the spiritual world and his abject condition in the world of sense, should deepen our interest in his welfare.

The teacher then, as he gathers his class around him must ask what is a child, and what is a child to be ? If he answers these questions fairly and thoroughly, he will labor with christian zeal and devotedness. What is a child and what is a child to be ? He is before you now, frail in body, untaught in mind and unformed in character. But each hour he *grows*. As that feeble frame is enlarged and becomes strong, appetites and passions are developed. That mind too, how busy and curious ! That will and conscience, those sentiments and affections how active, how they combine and co-operate to form a spirit, which reflects the beauty of holiness or the deformity of sin ! Follow that child as he goes onward in this life ; behold him exposed to temptation ; observe him hesitate between truth and falsehood, good and evil ; mark how he rejoices or how he suffers ; see him at home and abroad ; watch him as he enters into various relations, forms various unions, comes into collision with, acts and is acted upon by his breth-

ren! What is to be the result of all this—what the consummation of such a pilgrimage and such a warfare? Let your own experience and observation, in conjunction with the teachings of reason and scripture, furnish the imagination with the materials wherewith to create a picture of the child's whole career; let that picture be composed of the trials and joys, the sorrow and gladness of existence; let it exhibit the workings of thought and desire, hope and fear, as they move, tremble, struggle within; nay, let it carry the young being beyond the horizon of time and behold him rising to higher and yet higher attainments in goodness, or sinking deeper and yet deeper in sin: in a word, endeavor to see exemplified in that one child what you know must be the lot of human nature here and hereafter. Be not deceived by the cold language of custom. Think not the phenomena of existence are less wonderful or its solemnities the less oppressive, because all men are born to live and die, and live again. But consider what it is to *be*—to be moral, accountable, deathless beings; then remember the youth before you, whatever his outward form and visible garb, is actually and truly one of the myriads of such beings, coming from "God who is our home." Lose not the individual in the mass; but regard as fast-coming realities to him, what appertains to all mortals, both in time and in eternity. Doing thus, you cannot fail to reverence the soul. Doing thus, you shall go to your work, with faith, in earnest, and with a profound conviction of its

importance. Doing thus, you shall see the meaning of the blessing Jesus bestowed on little children; and understand what those startling words mean, "whosoever offends one of these little ones, it were better that a mill stone were hanged about his neck and he were drowned in the depths of the sea."

IV. Somewhat connected with the last, but deserving separate mention is another qualification desirable in a teacher, viz: *the habit of observing children* as they are moving, talking, playing around us. A zealous botanist sees every plant, although he may pass his friend without recognition. A true sailor examines every ship within the reach of his eye. Every one is quick to perceive and anxious to study whatever gratifies his ruling taste or can be made to promote his favorite pursuit. Thus should it, in like manner, be with the Sunday school teacher. As he is to labor for the young, let him omit no opportunity to watch and study the young. He needs to know their thoughts and feelings, and how they are wont to manifest them. He needs to know their dialect and the kind of language which they most readily understand and feel. This he can do, in part, by returning, in memory, to his own early days, and reproducing the consciousness of that season, and in part, by observing those who are just commencing the career of life. He must become again as a little child, think, act and talk, in a measure, as a little child. To be a wise and successful teacher, as well as to enter the kingdom of heaven, this is necessary.

It is an obvious remark, that although all men are alike in many respects and you may predicate certain truths of them universally, still there are wide differences in various classes, arising from the variety in their avocations and circumstances. The same measures, words and illustrations, which are proper and efficacious in addressing a community of farmers, would be out of place, and of little avail in addressing a congregation of sailors. Thus is it likewise with the different seasons of life. The instruction, or perhaps I should say the garb in which instruction is clothed, that meets the wants of manhood, is not appropriate to childhood. The child is the father of the man; but not, therefore, to be treated as you treat the man. It is necessary then, to study children. Many neglect to do this; and the bad consequences of this neglect are often very apparent. In the manner in which the faults of the young are dealt with, for example, you may frequently see a proof of the correctness of my remark. Many act in reference to sins in a child, as if they arose from depravity as great, as the same sins would evince when committed by a man. Take a case. A boy is quite profane. His teacher discovers it, is shocked and grieved, and immediately talks to him and threatens and warns him, as if he indulged in this sad habit with all an adult's knowledge of its iniquity. This may not be, and in numerous instances, this is not the fact. Children are great imitators, and perhaps the swearing boy has only copied a bad

example ever before him at home or elsewhere. The possibility that this is the truth of the matter ought to be borne in mind, and the pupil dealt with accordingly. I might add other illustrations, but have room only for hints. You can easily understand to what general truth I allude as applicable to the relation between the teacher and his pupil. In order to arrive at the degree of sinfulness in the actions of any person, you must know the extent of his knowledge of right and wrong. Bad habits are not always a sign of a wilfully bad heart. Before you punish a child then, be sure to know how much inward wickedness, his imitation of the vices of men indicates. The infant may copy the expressions of its guilty parent without having his spirit entirely, or even deeply corrupted. There is a transgression which grows out of circumstances, to be carefully distinguished from that which is the choice of the soul. A child may appear worse than he is, even as a man may appear better than he is.

These observations, although quite imperfect, may serve to show how essential an intimate knowledge of childhood is to the success of the teacher. How then is he to obtain this knowledge? By forming the habit of observing the young wherever he may meet them. This habit may be easily acquired, and experience will teach its worth better than any words of mine. Children are not to be understood at a glance. They are not the simple things some seem to imagine. Their minds are not to be compre-

hended, neither are their hearts to be reached by the superficial and thoughtless. As sagacity and wisdom is needful to him who would teach and govern men, so are they needful to him who would teach and govern children. Make it then, ever an object, to learn all you can of the ways of childhood. Think not that you can be perfect as teachers in a day, or even in months; for there are few subjects which require longer, more constant and patient study than the moral and religious culture of the young; and to the successful prosecution of this, it is necessary to have the eye trained to scrutinize, and the mind prepared carefully to ponder, the outward manifestation of the soul in its infancy.

LECTURE IV.

Qualifications of teachers continued.—5. Manner.—6. Language.—7. Keeping journals.

V. As I do not aim at a very orderly arrangement in my remarks, I will next say a word on the importance of *manner* in a teacher. I mean by manner his outward deportment and carriage towards his pupils. This deserves more consideration than some may suppose. I need not remind you how much effect is produced by manner among adults. You know that the best principles, the finest qualities of mind and heart, derive additional lustre and power from a graceful expression of them; and you know also how much real merit sometimes suffers, when its possessors are unfortunate in their demeanor. One who has a calm, modest and yet unembarrassed way, at once puts us at ease in his society. When we find ourselves charmed with a new acquaintance, how frequently we can trace the favorable impression to his mode of manifesting his thoughts and feelings, rather than to anything very superior in his talents or character. Some persons

win your good opinion by a shake of the hand. There is meaning in the gesture, the gait, the look of an individual. They are not merely outward graces which are put on; they are frequently visible types and signs of the state of the inner man.

If I may without irreverence, let me allude, as a farther illustration of my meaning, to the idea, the mental image we have of the Savior. His person has never been described. His eloquence has ceased to be audible. We know nothing of the form he wore while on earth. Yet we all imagine how he looked and spoke, when, for example, he delivered the sermon on the mount. Read the passage where he bids his hearers consider the lillies; as you read, have you not a picture in your mind of his attitude, while pointing to the flowers, "chosen thus and blessed," and do you not almost hear the voice, with which from them,

"That heavenly lesson for all hearts he drew,
Eternal, universal as the sky.

If, therefore, we thus involuntary embody certain sentiments and truths,—if there are fit shapes and expressions, which they at once suggest, then there is power, and great power too, in manner.

From these remarks, you may see why attention to our deportment towards children, is of consequence. It has much to do with the preservation of order and the gaining of atten-

tion. Indeed, I suppose example and care, in relation to this matter, on the part of individual teachers, will go farther than almost anything else to insure propriety of behavior in the Sunday school. Teachers then should study to be quiet and gentle in their own motions; calm, firm, and yet earnest in their tones. A look will oftentimes do more than a threat, or a long and sober exhortation.

I may seem, to some, to be dwelling on a trifle; but I think otherwise. On reflection you will find that there is some weight in my suggestions. Order and stillness are surely necessary in the school. Any hints, therefore, pointing out any way of obtaining them, are of value. Allow me then to repeat my remark, that the silent influence of a correct manner in the teachers, will be seen in the deportment of the children. Let the instructor be in the habit of talking loud, of moving rapidly, of taking awkward positions; and however much good he may do, he will probably have a noisy, boisterous class, to the annoyance of his neighbors and the whole school. In our treatment of our pupils, therefore, let us endeavor to exhibit a simple, affectionate, and polite manner. If we would have them respectful towards us, we must be respectful towards them. We must teach them by example to be still; to lay down books with caution; to button the pew doors; to see that the crickets stand firm, and that umbrellas are not in a position to be easily overthrown. To prevent them from being pert, we must avoid being fret-

ful ; to prevent them from pushing and jostling each other, we must neither jerk, nor pull them into good behavior. All necessary firmness may be thrown into a calm and even affectionate manner : and there are few cases where force will answer a better purpose in the end than calm persuasion. I mean not by this, however, that authority is never to be used, or that occasions for the use of some severity never occur. Propriety of behavior is to be secured at all events ; and if it cannot, in any sad instance, be obtained by kindness and persuasion, perhaps the best course is to remove the offender, after suitable warning, from the school.

The remarks I have made, may not be universally applicable ; still, as the humblest parts of a machine are liable to be overlooked, while they are nevertheless essential to its perfection, I do not think they will be found wholly out of place.

VI. I pass to another topic, viz. the *language* to be used by teachers. On this point I shall offer you but two suggestions. 1. Be careful to avoid all *atheistical* phraseology. This may strike you as a very strange hint ; it is one, however, of some moment. There is frequently in very good people a reluctance to use a religious, christian dialect. I have no reference, in saying this, to the peculiar terms of a sect, or the stereotyped phrases of theology ; but I mean those words which correctly express not only the thoughts of manly piety, but likewise the simple truth.

This error is most obvious when the phenomena of creation are the subjects of discourse. These are spoken of as the works of *nature*; a phrase which, besides being cold and without meaning, prevents man from acknowledging, as he ought, the Omnipresent God. However excusable such a style of address may be in scientific lectures and books, it should never enter the Sunday school. If the beautiful and wonderful things of the earth and the heavens are there adverted to, let it always be done with a recognition of the Almighty. Never speak of nature as a creative or a protecting power. But let the visible world be described as both an evidence of the existence and a manifestation of the overflowing love of our Father. The child should be taught to look upon creation as a message from God, as another Bible, full of glorious emblems for the eye, and sounds of music for the ear. There should be no second causes to conceal from him the First Cause. He should early learn not to mistake instruments, agents and processes, for the creative energy of the Infinite One. Thus the sentiment of devotion may be warmed into life; thus discontent and fretfulness may be checked; and thus science and natural philosophy may become handmaidens of piety. Accustom, therefore, your children to look at flowers as clothed in glory, at birds as fed and protected, at all things as called into being and preserved by their heavenly Father.

2. Let your language to your children be

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simple but not childish. It is a mistake to suppose, that to be understood by them, you must use "baby-talk." Hard words are not so much the cause of difficulty in making yourselves understood, as the want of clear thoughts within their comprehension, or the failure to employ illustrations, or the neglect of details. In "Abbôt's Way To Do Good," there are some excellent remarks on this point, which I will here quote, recommending at the same, time, the whole of the chapter, (that on children,) from which they are taken, to your attention, as containing many valuable and useful thoughts.

"The great difficulty with instructions and addresses to childhood, and the books written for them, is not want of simplicity, as is commonly supposed, but *generality—abstractness*—a mode of exhibiting a subject or a train of thoughts, which presents no distinct conceptions to a mind which is unaccustomed to any elements of thought which have not form or color. So that that which is precise, and striking, and clear to the mind of the speaker, is vague, and undefined, and inappreciable to the uninformed minds to which it is addressed.

"Be exceedingly minute in the details of what you describe. Take very short steps, and take each one very distinctly. If, for instance, you are narrating to a man, you may simply say, if such an incident occurs in the course of the narrative, that your hero 'went down to the shore and got into a boat and pushed off.' Your hearer has probably got into a boat often enough to understand it. But if you are talking to a child,

he will be more interested if you say, 'he went down to the shore and found a boat there. One end of the boat, the front part, which they call the bows, was up against the shore a little in the sand. The other end was out on the water, and moved up and down gently with the waves. There were seats across the boat, and two oars lying along upon the seats. The man stepped upon the bows of the boat. It was fast in the sand, so that it did not sink under him. Then he took up one of the oars and began to push against the shore to push himself off. But as he was standing upon the bows, his weight pressed the bows down hard upon the sand, and so he could not push the boat off. Then he went to the other end of the boat, stepping over the seats. The other end of the boat is the stern. The stern sank a little, and the boat rocked from one side to the other, and made the oar which was on the seats rattle. There was nothing but water under the stern of the boat, and that was what made it unsteady. The man stepped carefully, and when he was fairly in the stern, he reached his oar out again, and now he could push it off. The bows rubbed slowly back, off the sand, and in a minute the whole boat was floating off on the water.'"

VII. Before I close, I may as well recommend a practice which I intended to have suggested before now. I refer to the practice of keeping a journal of what takes place each Sunday in your classes. You wish to notice every characteristic manifested by your pupils; to know, by com-

paring one day with another, in what way you most interest them; to reach these and other beneficial ends, the plan I advise will be of much assistance. The effort to do this will be of manifest advantage to your own minds, and enable you to improve upon yourselves. And here let me add, that the true teacher will wish for such aids, because he will always look upon himself as a learner. Neither in one day, or one month, or one year, can we know or do all our office requires. We must keep our minds open to receive more and more light. Sometimes teachers, I fear, go on in one way, having no idea that they are to advance, or that they can derive help from the experience of others. It is not so. The Sunday school is even yet in its infancy, and in some degree an experiment. We should, therefore, neglect no means or opportunities that promise to add to our knowledge or to increase our usefulness.*

* Since the above was written I have known instances where the pupils in the older classes in a Sunday school keep a journal; each one in turn writing the record of a day. The journal is read every Sunday. The effect is said, by the teachers, to be excellent.

LECTURE V.

Qualifications of Teachers continued.—8. Visiting the scholars.—9 The co-operation of parents to be sought.
—10 Punctuality and Constancy.

VIII. *The true teacher will endeavor to see his scholars as frequently as possible.* This suggestion will commend itself as important to every one the moment he reflects that the value of the Sunday school arises, in no small degree, from its being the means of establishing a close, affectionate and christian connexion between adults and the young. He takes a low view of his vocation, as a teacher, who supposes it is his whole duty to hear recitations and give instruction on Sunday. His influence ought to be the influence of one who seeks in his pupils, not merely the increase of knowledge, but also, and mainly, the formation of a christian character; and to exert such an influence, he needs their love and confidence, a familiar acquaintance with their condition in life, the circumstances by which they are surrounded at home, the temptations to which they are daily exposed, and, in short, all the information he can obtain concerning every thing that affects their moral growth. To obtain this

necessary knowledge, he must of course see the members of the class often, and see them, too, as one who has a constant interest in their welfare, is ready to rejoice and to weep with them, anxious to utter, in season, the word of advice, caution and reproof to the extent of his ability, and desirous of acting the part of a friendly guide to his young fellow pilgrims. Is not this a correct account of what the teacher should aim to accomplish? And if so, does it not urge upon him the habit of visiting his scholars, more or less, as a duty not to be neglected?

Let the teacher have a true idea of his office, and he will find that almost as much may be done for his pupils out of the school as in it. By seeing them during the week, he can better discover their peculiarities of character and learn a great deal which will give a successful direction to his labors on Sunday. Besides, the sort of familiar intercourse I recommend, will lead to that mutual attachment between the instructor and his scholars, without which his exertions are not of great value; for, in all probability he will be lukewarm and formal, while they will be indifferent and listless. To gain the ear of an adult, you must first find an avenue to his heart; and the same remark is doubly applicable to a child. The teacher must love his charge, and they must love him, or else their weekly meetings will do little good to either. I repeat the suggestion therefore, visit your scholars. I do not mean by this, make only formal calls upon them. I mean, take the most natural methods

of cultivating an intimate acquaintance with them. If you meet them in the street have a kind word and a smile ready. If you see them at their plays, manifest an interest in their innocent recreations. If they are sick, go to them, with some little gift, or some pleasant story, or some soothing conversation. Endeavor, to prove to them in those thousand ways, true affection suggests, that you are their friend.

Besides all the other advantages resulting from such a course of conduct on the part of a teacher, it will do much to give him a relish for his office. His work will become an affair of the heart. Loving and being loved, he will not toil merely because it is a duty, but also because it is a rich pleasure. I should be willing to test the truth of this remark by an appeal to experience. I venture to say, that the teacher who does the most for his class, who keeps up the closest intercourse with them, who thinks of them frequently, watches over them with something of the solicitude of a guardian angel, and has the most anxiety about their progress in goodness, I venture to say, such a teacher is the one who finds his office the most interesting and would be the least disposed to quit it.

IX. Besides cultivating an intimacy with his pupils, the true teacher will *seek the acquaintance and co-operation of their parents*. Many benefits will follow from reducing this hint to practice. It will do away in some measure an objection frequently urged against the Sunday school. It is often said that this institution has

a tendency to destroy the feeling of parental responsibility in regard to the religious culture of the young. I have before remarked, that I do not think this tendency necessary or very common. Still in some instances it may exist, and wherever this is the case, the evil can be remedied, in part certainly, by efforts made by teachers to bring about a close union between the Sunday school and the homes of their pupils. Let them go to those homes, and solicit from fathers and mothers the aid to which they have a right, and which will not be refused. Let them inform parents of whatever difficulties they experience, and seek from parents, who have the best opportunities for judging, all the knowledge they can impart as to the temper, the habits of mind, and the peculiarities of character in their children. The teacher can at the best only know his scholars partially: the short time he is personally with them, affords but slender means for obtaining all the information needed to make his instructions efficacious; consequently for much, very much of that information he must be indebted to the father or the mother who see his pupils almost every hour, and have watched over them from infancy. But besides increasing his own ability to be faithful, the teacher who is in the habit of visiting the parents, will do good in other ways. The children will see that he is in earnest; that he goes not to his labors for form sake; that he is not a mere mechanical hearer of lessons; but on the contrary, from his co-operation and intercourse with those whom they know are most so-

licitous for their welfare, they will infer that he too loves them, and is interested in making them wiser and better. They will, therefore, look to him with more respect, and affection, and treat him with more openness and frankness. In other words, the practice I recommend will do much towards obtaining for the teacher the hearts and the esteem of his charge; a point, as I have before said, that must be gained before he can hope to be successful in the discharge of his office.

In addition to the good effects already hinted at, may not another follow from a familiar intercourse between parents and teachers? May it not keep the former more alive to the existence, and more impressed with a sense of the importance, of the Sunday school? Where such an intercourse exists, I imagine it will be found that the children are in their places, from week to week, more regularly and punctually; that their lessons are better learned, and their whole deportment more correct. And if this result comes from teachers' visits, then surely they are of no little consequence; for, every one must see that few things are more needed to the improvement of the Sunday school, than a deeper and more practical interest in its welfare on the part of parents. If then you would understand, thoroughly, the characters of your scholars, if you would have them listen to you with affectionate attention, if you would give new life and importance to the Sunday school, by deepening the interest of the religious community in its behalf, be as-

sured you may do much to reach these and many other desirable ends, by putting into practice, as far as may be, the habit of visiting both your children and their parents.

X. The true teacher will be as *punctual and constant as possible* in his attendance on Sunday. Much has been said on this subject; and in almost all schools, it is a standing complaint, that the tardiness and frequent absence of some teachers, greatly interfere with their prosperity. These seem to be an abiding matter of regret,—a sort of chronic disease, which, although it may be checked, is beyond the reach of entire cure. But one view ought to be taken in relation to this evil, and that is,—teachers who cannot come to their work regularly and punctually, had better not come at all. This remark is not made, as applicable to absences occasioned by visits out of town, sickness, or other peculiar and unavoidable causes, unless it is probable such absences must often occur; neither is it made in the way of censure and complaint; but it is made because the fault to which it refers is inconsistent with the usefulness, and if at all prevalent, with the very existence of anything but the name and form of a Sunday school.

Is it not so? Just consider a few of its most disastrous effects. In the first place, since actions speak louder than words, it says to the class, that the teacher cannot be truly and deeply engaged in his vocation,—that they are not the company he loves,—neither is the school the place to

which his heart directs him. It argues a want of interest on his, and produces a corresponding want of interest on their part. The best classes are often thus spoiled, if not actually driven away.

In the second place, the tardiness of which I speak, has a bad tendency in regard to the usual introductory services of the school. When classes see their teachers entering the room after those services are over, they infer, and fairly infer, that they are not held in the highest respect; they are taught to consider the prayer and hymn, as of no great importance, as a mere form. Whatever such teachers may say to them of devotion, as a duty, will probably be little heeded. If we wish children to go reverently and sincerely to the altar, we must go with them;—we must teach them by example that the devotional exercises are the highest and holiest exercises.

In the third place, want of punctuality prevents the profitable use of the little time it leaves the teacher. The library books, and other matters, not directly connected with the lessons, are to be attended to. But if the teacher makes his appearance late, time must be pilfered from the hour, that ought to be given to the business of instruction.

In the fourth place, the tardy teacher not only injures his own influence, but also injures the rest of the school. The superintendent must neglect his duties to attend to the *headless* class, or he must impose double duty on some oth-

er teacher, or he must leave a number of boys or girls to spend the hour in idleness, if not in mischief, to the injury of themselves and to the annoyance and hurt of the whole school.

In the fifth place, punctuality is a christian virtue, better taught by example, than by precept. What can the procrastinating teacher say about it, that will have weight? His practice will contradict his words. It will not do for him to censure the truant and loiterer. The fact that his services are voluntary makes no difference. If he undertakes the office of a teacher, he is bound to discharge it faithfully; and even then does no more than his duty. Much of that duty too is to be performed by actions: and among those actions few, if any, are of more moment than to be a pattern of punctuality and constancy. The class should never wait for *him*.

These are some of the evils of tardiness and absence on the part of teachers. I have spoken of them plainly, not to be severe or harsh, but in order that they may be distinctly seen, strongly felt, carefully avoided. No Sunday school can prosper where they exist to any great extent; they will neutralize the best efforts for its welfare.

In conclusion, therefore, I would say, first, if a teacher cannot be constant and punctual, let him not enter the Sunday school; or, if there already, let him leave at once. Secondly, if a teacher is under the necessity of being absent,

let him consider it a duty to provide a substitute, or to give seasonable notice to the superintendent, so that his place may be filled. This is essential. Each teacher occupies a post no one can so well maintain as he. He is a member of an institution, where every one must do his own work, bear his own burthen. If he cannot be relied on, he is of little service. Moreover, he has entered on a field of labor which will require self-denial. He cannot consult ease and inclination, and yet be true to duty. He must feel that a responsibility rests upon him, and that sacrifices will sometimes be necessary. He must, unless superior claims forbid, face the storm, endure the heat, bear the cold. He must consent to forego the pleasure of gratifying curiosity, and be satisfied with the pleasure of doing good. To say all in a word, to be successful and happy, in our efforts to improve children, we must show them by deed and word, that, so far as lies in our power, we are, and willing to be devoted to them.

I have now finished what I have to suggest concerning the *qualifications* of teachers, before speaking of them as directly engaged in the business of instruction; it may not be amiss, therefore, to close this number with a recapitulation of those qualifications. 1. The teacher should enter upon and pursue his work from a sense of christian duty. 2. The teacher should cherish a trustful and hopeful spirit. 3. The teacher should reverence the human soul. 4. The teacher should study children. 5. The

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teacher should feel the importance of manner.
6. The teacher should be careful in his language.
7. The teacher should keep a journal. 8. The
teacher should visit his children, and (9.) their
parents. 10. The teacher should be punctual
and constant in his attendance at the school.

LECTURE VI.

The teacher engaged in the business of instruction—Order in the class—The ultimate object—Present occasion to be used—how?—Plan needed.

I AM now to speak of the teacher as directly engaged in the business of instruction; and my first remark is, that he should aim, at the outset, to have perfect *order* in his class. Supposing the teacher to be just entering upon his vocation, I should recommend to him, to study such an arrangement of his scholars in the pew, or seat, as will best secure quiet, and then to make the necessity of correct deportment his first lesson. It must not be forgotten that discipline is as essential in the Sunday school, as in other schools, or in the family. Good behavior should be at once firmly insisted on; and any child who refuses to conduct with propriety ought not to be allowed to remain to the injury of his companions, or the interruption of the instructor. I do not mean that the teacher should be hasty or rash,—that he should exercise no forbearance,—or that he should act with the same promptitude in the dismissal of a pupil, that would in other cases be justifiable. Children come to

the Sunday school to be improved in habits and character, and not solely to be taught. Some of them are so situated in life, that they learn little about politeness, and know little about good manners; of course, they are to be treated with more than usual patience, lest they should desert the school, and the opportunity to benefit them be lost. But this caution and forbearance is not to be carried too far. Gentlemanlike and ladylike, or rather christianlike conduct, together with proper stillness and attention must constantly be required: and when, after fair warning and due admonitions, any child persists in wrong doing, that child, for the sake of the class,—for the sake of the whole school, ought to be reported to the superintendent and dismissed.

Having arranged his class, the teacher proceeds to instruct them. What he is to teach, and how he is to teach, I shall speak of hereafter. Before doing so, I wish to suggest two preliminary considerations of some consequence.

1 Let the teacher remember that his ultimate object is not the communication of knowledge, but the formation of character,—that he is to have reference not so much to the intellect as to the heart; and therefore, let him not think that he is to help his children to be good, if I may use the expression, *by and by*, but to be good *now, at once, and on the spot*, so far as opportunities for the exercise of virtue occur. To the thoughtful, vigilant teacher, such opportunities will frequently present themselves. Ma-

ny of the christian graces may, on a small scale, be cultivated and exercised within the limits of a pew and an hour. Let the teacher then seize upon any thing that may take place in the class, as a topic of conversation and instruction. Suppose the scholars crowd each other or struggle for the best seat: from this the teacher may take occasion to speak of selfishness, and to recommend gentleness and self-denial. Suppose a child has her attention fixed on her own or her neighbor's fine clothes: from this the teacher may very naturally be led to say something about vanity and the love of dress. And so in many other instances. The behavior of the scholars will very frequently furnish the means of making an immediate and salutary impression. I mention this point because I have sometimes thought that both in Sunday schools and families, there is apt to be too much reference to the future, or perhaps it is more proper to say, too little reference to the present. It is by doing the duty of the moment, the duty nearest to them, that men, women and children grow better. To practice virtue, at once, even on a small scale, is the best way to understand and feel its worth.

In making the use I recommend of the actual appearance of faults in a class, at the time of their appearance, the teacher must treat them wisely. I do not advise that he should make them the texts of lectures. I would have him so employ them, that the children themselves shall discover their impropriety, and pass condem-

nation on them. It is a general principle of wide application, that the conscience of an offender should be his judge and utter his sentence; and with children it is all important that they should be made to see and feel, for themselves, that they have done wrong. By skilful conversation the pupil should be led to see any particular sin that has been committed, and also, why it is a sin. A boy may be reproved and punished, and from fear of reproof and punishment, kept from doing a wrong act, without ever, for himself, being conscious that the act is wrong. Conscience was intended by providence to be the judge of man, and no voice of a teacher will be so authoritative and convincing as the voice of the monitor within. The way in which conscience can be aroused and made the agent of censure, can be seen in the following examples. A boy, about to throw stones at some pigeons, saw a lady coming towards him, and immediately put his hands behind him. The lady took no direct notice of his effort to conceal his weapons, and deceive her. She simply and good naturedly asked him; "What he should think, if, while at play with his companions, a large, strong and cruel man, or giant, should come along, and wantonly begin to throw rocks at them." The boy dropped the stones and the lady went on her way. Again,—a teacher left his class for a few moments, and they were observed by the superintendent to be playing. He went, to them, and held this short conversation: "Should you call him a

good boy who behaved well only now and then?" "No." "Whom should you call a good boy?" "Why, one that behaved well all the time." "That is, you mean, all the time his parent or any body was looking at him?" "No, we dont mean that. We mean a boy that behaves well, whether people are looking at him or not." "How then will a good class behave while the teacher is absent?"—The class was immediately still. These are simple anecdotes ; but they may serve to illustrate my meaning : which is that we should always endeavor to make offenders sit in judgement on themselves, and discover for themselves the impropriety of their conduct.

Something like the use, which, as I have suggested, may be made by the teacher, of the appearance of faults in his class, for purposes of practical instruction, may also be made of other accidental occurrences, or any events which happen, at the time, to interest his pupils. Sometimes the minds of children are so taken up with particular subjects, that it will be difficult to fix their attention on the regular lesson ; and frequently it will be found best to follow out, to a good result, trains of thought that are suggested, at the moment, by circumstances. On the approach of certain holydays, for example, the young are full of anticipations, and are quite absorbed in expected pleasures. Such occasions may be often employed with profit, when any attempt to divert the thoughts of pupils to other matters, would be almost fruitless. It was the remark of an individual of much wisdom ; " That

a minister must see, and be sure to strike when the iron is *hot*." The same advice may be given to the Sunday school teacher. The efficacy of instruction depends very much on its being appropriate and in season. As a feeble illustration of the manner in which a very slight circumstance may be made to teach important truth, I venture to sketch an example. The teacher of a class was absent, and another individual took charge of them for a few moments. The boys had no regular lesson, and there seemed but little chance of doing any good. On looking round the pew, however, the temporary teacher saw a small piece of wrought iron, which he took up, and something like the following conversation occurred: "How came this here?" "H. T. left it here. He sits in this pew." "What is it?" "A piece of iron." "Where does iron come from?" "Out of the earth." "Does it come out of the earth in this form, and looking as this does?" "Oh, no. It is mixed with earth." "What is it called, when it is dug out of the earth?" "Ore." "Is iron of any use?" "Oh yes." "How did people ever get along without it?" "I don't know—I don't see how they ever could do without it." "It seems to you absolutely necessary, then, does it?" "Yes." "Look around this meeting house; how much of the usefulness of iron can you see here?" The boys named nails, screws, stoves, &c. &c. "Are these all the things made of iron of which you can think?" "Oh, no." "Does man make iron?" "No." "Who does?" "God." "We

could not do without it, you think?" "No."
 "What now may this bit of old iron teach you?"
 "The goodness of God." "Suppose a religious
 and a irreligious man should happen to come to
 a mine of iron ore, would they probably have
 the same thoughts?" "No." "What would
 the irreligious man be likely to think of?" "Of
 how many things the iron would make; of how
 much money it was worth." "What would the
 religious man be likely to think of?" "The
 goodness of God." "Could man live without
 doing something for himself?" "No." "Sup-
 pose man did every thing he could,—unless
 something was done *for* him, could he live?
 He may plough the ground and plant the seed,
 but can he make the seed grow?" "No."
 "Who helps man?" "God." "Can you move
 your hands, your feet? Can you talk and run?"
 "Yes." "Can you do these things or not, as
 you please?" "Yes." "Will your hands,
 feet, tongue, &c. move of themselves?" "No."
 "Must you *will*, must you *think* to move them?"
 "Yes." "Could you live without breathing?"
 "No." "Do you think always before you
 breathe?" "No." "Must you keep breathing
 all the time?" "Yes." "Suppose you were
 obliged to think to breathe—just as you are oblig-
 ed to think to move your hands, &c.?" "We
 could not do any thing else." "Could you
 sleep?" "No." "Suppose you should, if that
 were possible, forget to breathe?" "We should
 die." "Then, if you had to keep stopping to
 think to breathe, you could do nothing else, could

you?" "No." "What then does the contrivance of your lungs, &c., so that breathing goes on regularly, without your being obliged to will or to think about it, teach?" "The goodness of God." "When you see a piece of iron, or when you consider that you keep breathing without thinking about it, what ought you to remember?" "The goodness of God." Here the school was dismissed.

II. The other consideration I wished to suggest before speaking of the particular subjects of instruction in the Sunday school, is that the teacher should have some general plan or system. It is not enough that he gets through one Sunday after another, without having any connection between them. He ought, in his own mind, at least, to have his work laid out, so as to pursue, to a greater or less extent, a regular course. If it is not well to have instruction too formal and systematic; neither is it well to have it too desultory. To talk about a passage in scripture one Sunday, to read a story another, to speak of sacred geography a third, and so on, will not answer a very good purpose. From what I have already said, you will perceive I am disposed to allow a good deal of latitude, and recommend that advantage be taken of favorable occasions for making impressions, even at the expense of the regular lesson. But this practice must not be carried too far. Some general plan will be found of great assistance; and teachers, if they had one, would not so often find themselves at a loss what to do, what to say, or

what to teach next. This plan, moreover, should study variety. Instruction should not be wholly addressed to the mind, neither should the hour be devoted entirely to addresses to the conscience or affections. Information and advice, knowledge and exhortation, may both come in, each day, for a share of attention ; the former, indeed, will frequently be found needful as a groundwork for the latter. When a teacher is to remain some time in the school, and has the prospect of retaining the same class, he will do well to follow out a course. This will make the work of preparation, and the actual business of teaching easier, and tend to increase the interest of his pupils. I need not dwell on this point, because its necessity will be fully seen hereafter ; but I could not omit a distinct notice of it ; for, to the neglect of it, I suppose, much of the weariness and lukewarmness of teachers may fairly be attributed.

LECTURE VII.

The matter and manner of Sunday school instruction—
What results to be proposed —Subjects of instruction —
1. Child's own nature.

I AM next to speak of the matter and manner of Sunday school instruction. On this extensive and important subject, I can only offer a few brief and desultory suggestions.

The question that meets us at the outset,—a question already adverted to,—is ; what result is to be proposed in all our teaching ? Not, I answer, the improvement of the intellect or the communication of knowledge alone ; both of these objects are to receive attention, as subservient to the prime purpose ; but neither are to be sought as ends. To aid the child in the formation of a christian character, to develope his religious nature, to point out to him the true life, to promote his growth in active goodness, to assist, under God, in advancing his salvation as an immortal spirit,—a portion of this great and glorious work, it may be the privilege, as it ought to be the desire, of the Sunday school teacher to perform. This cannot be done by one agent or one effort. To teach mechanically a few doctrines, use a few

manuals, utter a few precepts, will not be sufficient. In the education of man, providence employs a great variety of influences. The Sunday school teacher, in this respect, in some humble measure, must endeavor to imitate providence. The same method will not always be the best method. But in every plan it must be remembered, that whatever has no tendency directly or indirectly, to bring children into the kingdom of heaven, is out of place in the Sunday school. To amuse, to interest, to instruct, is not all. To make your pupils—or rather to help your pupils, to become good, is the point never to be forgotten.

I do not say this because I would narrow the field of the teacher, or confine him to a few instruments; but on the contrary, as I have said, because I would give him great latitude, and allow him to study much variety; provided in so doing, the end to be sought, the good ultimately to be arrived at, is not overlooked. There is some danger lest teachers rest content with pleasing their pupils from day to day, and fail to inquire what will probably be the final and entire effect of the course they pursue. Against this danger we must carefully guard. Whatever we teach and however we teach, then, let us remember our office is a holy office, and unless we discharge it so as to produce *religious* results, we do not discharge it aright.

Having thus, once more recognized the design of the Sunday school, we may without fear of

I. And first, the child's own nature is to be revealed to him. He is to be made conscious of what he is, led to see, and as far as may be, to comprehend himself. His thoughts are to be turned in upon his own soul, and employed in the business of self-study. Perhaps, it is one of the most difficult, as it is one of the most neglected duties in the instruction of the young, to aid them in the acquisition of a knowledge of their own being. Yet this is the primary duty to be performed. Conduct, actions, and words, are so to speak the countenance, the expression of the soul. They are its language; the instruments whereby it makes itself visible and audible. To trace these manifestations to their causes, to accustom the child to refer the outward phenomena, to the spirit which produces them, is one of the first, as it ought to be one of the last objects aimed at. How are we to reach it? Are we to teach metaphysics; or use, with young children, books on intellectual or moral philosophy? Are we to deliver lectures on the will, the conscience, and other powers of the mind? Of course not. We are simply to endeavor to make children conscious of *facts*, which exist and occur in themselves. Having explained to them, or rather led them to see that "there is a spirit in man," something distinct from the body, then we are to direct attention to the constitution and operations of that spirit. This may be done in a simple and familiar way.

Children can feel and think; and consequently

they may know themselves as well as older philosophers. There is no more mystery about our spiritual faculties and powers to a child, than there is to an adult. The former may not be able to use or to understand the technical, abstract language of the latter, but he has experience of all that language represents. You may talk with him, therefore, about the *thing*, you may turn his thoughts inward, you may describe the soul, with as much success, as you can describe the external world. One of the best methods to do this, is to direct attention, by use of biography and anecdotes, to certain actions, and then trace those actions back to the principles which gave them birth. I have room only for one or two brief illustrations, of the process I recommend.

You wish to instruct a child about conscience. Show him, then, so to speak, conscience in actions. Take e. g. the case of Peter, tell the story of his too great confidence in himself—describe the scene at the house of Annas and Caiaphas—the repeated denials of the timid apostle—the crowing of the cock—the *look* of Jesus; then ask what it was that sent Peter out to weep so bitterly. By a series of questions you may lead the child to perceive the workings and the effects of the monitor within. A similar use might be made of the apostacy of Judas, and a multitude of other examples. You may appeal too with success to the pupil's own experience. You may so fix his attention on the outward signs by which conscience manifests its power

as to make him intensely conscious of the existence and fearful nature of that faculty.

Perhaps, sometimes, it will be well to take a whole scene or story, and by a series of questions aid the class in analyzing the characters, and in referring to their causes in the soul, the various speeches and actions of the persons engaged in it. For this purpose the Bible will be found a rich store-house of examples. You may describe some transaction, and then endeavor to induce the children to think out, and discover, and feel for themselves, the various desires and faculties shown forth in it.

I suppose I make myself understood. I merely mean to suggest that to acquaint the young with their own minds and hearts, we may regard their actions, or the actions of others as creations outward expressions of the soul, and then teach them to refer each part of those creations, and expressions to the sentiment, feeling, or principle which produced it. Suppose I wished to acquaint a boy with man's capacity to plan, invent, &c. I would take the making of a kite, and endeavor to bring him to feel and understand that the kite is made by the mind. Suppose I desired to show that there is in man a sentiment of reverence; I would select some example of respect paid to the great and good, and thus exhibit that sentiment in actual exercise. In some such way as this, you may teach even very small children much about themselves, accustom them to look within, make them thoughtful, and open to them true views of duty

and of life, before they are carried away the victims of sense.

Perhaps one of the most common and deleterious defects in education is, that children are not early and constantly accustomed to habits of reflection and introspection. They are capable of forming such habits, and when once formed, of course, their value is incalculable. How much evil, how much scepticism, would be prevented, were men as studious of themselves as of outward things. How plain would it appear that many of their plans and purposes, now deemed innocent, are papable violations of laws of their being, easily ascertained, and withal fixed and unchangeable. From this ignorance we are to endeavor to save the young, by making them conscious of what they are, by helping them to examine and obtain clear notions of what goes on within their own bosoms. This is not a task so very difficult; they will meet you more than half way; and the means and occasions for its accomplishment are at hand every moment. Every thing a child says or does, is the offspring of some principle within; all you have to do then is to point out the connection between the cause and the effect. Thus you may teach what are the elemens of human nature, wherein it differs from the natrue of the animals. Thus you may fix thought on the powers and capacities of the soul, and prevent the light within from becoming darkness. Thus, in short, you may go with your pupils into the un-

seen and spiritual world, where the soul lives, and where the kingdom of heaven is to be established.

In the performance of the task of which have been speaking, assistance may be derived from the labors of others. I have already alluded to the use you may make of the Bible. Gallauet's Book on the Soul is, I suppose, a useful manual for the Sunday school, and may be employed with advantage in endeavors to explain the phenomena of the spirit. Some of Krummacher's Parables, also, may serve a good purpose as furnishing beautiful illustrations.

LECTURE VIII.

Subjects of Instruction. 2. Outward creation.

II. In my last number a few remarks were made on revealing to children their own natures. In this I propose to say a word or two of the use which may be made of the outward creation, in the instructions of the Sunday school. The external world is the elder revelation, and was intended, without doubt, to do much for the right education of the human soul. Its beauty interests, and its wonders astonish. All its forms and changes have a meaning; and, to him who hath an eye to see, it is ever presenting manifestations of high truths. The influences of nature on man are many and various, although often silent and unseen: and how much its scenes and wonders affect his character, no one can tell or even imagine. That it may promote his welfare as a religious being, we have proof in the directions given by our Savior, "to consider the lilies of the field," and "to behold the fowls of the air." This direction moreover, is sufficient authority for the Sunday school teacher, who employs natural history as one topic of instruction. Let

me then suggest the ends to be kept in view, and the benefit to be looked for by wisely, and at proper times, directing the minds and hearts of your pupils to the study of creation.

1. You may furnish them with employment for their leisure hours,—excite a taste for innocent recreations,—and keep them “out of mischief.” Even this is not a small good; nor is it beneath the attention of the religious teacher.

Before the seeds of christian truth can be sown, the ground must be prepared for them, by the eradication of all poisonous weeds. To keep out evil, is one step towards the introduction of good. The mind and the heart of a child must and will be occupied. He must and will have amusements. He must and will seek employment for his busy thoughts and hands. Childhood is naturally active, curious, anxious for something to do. What is called mischief, and sometimes even vice, is little else than the consequence of a desire for action. Children cannot be idle; if not provided therefore with business and useful work, they are exposed to the invitations and allurements of sinful pleasures. If, then, by all your efforts to interest the young in nature, you only succeed in protecting a portion of their time from the inroads of evil, you succeed in doing much. This doctrine of prevention is of immense importance,—this provision of employment for children, is a matter deserving serious thought. Suppose the result is only negative; it fills the place of something else that would be positively bad. If a love of the

birds, and the flowers, and the "rainbow colored shells," does not and cannot make the boy a christian; it may frequently prevent his being led astray by wickedness. On a point so obvious, it is needless to dwell. To provide harmless and pleasant amusement for your scholars, to awaken such tastes as shall, during playtime and holydays, guard them against gross vice, is an end worth much exertion,—a good by no means to be despised. It is better that a child should be fond of plants, than of games, in which without being over-fanciful, or over-fearful, one may see the seeds of war, gambling, avarice, and unholy ambition. Go out with your pupils "to meditate in the field,"—explain to them the skill and wisdom shown in the creation,—teach them to love the shady aisles of the forest, the smiling bosoms of the valleys, and the free air of the hill-top. If you accomplish nothing more by this, than their removal for a few hours from street-rambling and street-plays, you accomplish much. Do not then think the moments wasted, or devoted to an unchristian task, which are occasionally given to conversation on the works of God, although that conversation may not directly reach or benefit the religious nature. There is wisdom as well as point in the saying of the old divine; "If you do not fill a child's head with something, be assured the devil will."

3. But far more than what I have thus far intimated, may and will be done. Religious knowledge can be gained by, and religious sentiments can be awakened in the child, who is taught to

study the outward universe. What is that universe but a manifestation of God,—what is it but God in action,—what is it but God revealing himself to man through the medium of glorious and beautiful symbols. His attributes shine out in the stars; their names are heard as whispered by the evening breeze, as thundered forth by the raging storm, and they are traced on the petals of the humblest blossom. The power and wisdom of the Almighty, the unspeakable love and goodness of our Father in Heaven, are shown forth in his works. Proofs of divine presence, and care, and benevolence are on every side. To see, to observe, and to consider these, is one lesson the child is to be taught. This lesson, however, is not learned, when a taste merely for natural history is awakened. The religious study of nature is that which is to be pursued in the Sunday school. There creation is to be spoken of, its grandeur admired, and its loveliness dwelt upon, as a message from the Infinite Spirit, as the expression of His might, and His beneficence. You will allow me then to remind you of what I said in a former number about atheistical language. You should be careful not to allow children to stop at second causes, not to allow them to forget *who* made and governs the universe. Read to them the volume of nature as “a God-written Bible.” Let the heavens declare to them “His glory.” Let the firmament be to them, “His handy-work.” Be sure that when you lead them to communion with the world without, the religious sentiment, grati-

tude, devotion, is thereby warmed and increased. Make if you can—

Each cup a pulpit, and each leaf a book.

3. There is one other use that may be made of external nature in the Sunday school. It furnishes materials for allegories and parables, and other illustrations of truth. In the New Testament you have the highest authority for this mode of communicating instruction. There the Savior bids the bird, the grass and lilies of the field, the growing corn, the rising sun, the living water, the vine, and the ripe harvest, convey to the soul holiest truth. To trace out, therefore, the analogy between the natural and moral worlds, to employ the former in making visible, as it were, the latter, to find in what the eye sees with delight and the ear hears with exquisite pleasure, types of spiritual things, cannot fail to be, at once, interesting and profitable. I might dwell on this topic and bring numberless illustrations of my remarks; but I suppose their correctness and force are too obvious to make it necessary so to do. I will only add, that in carrying my suggestions into practice, you may derive much aid from poetry. Many beautiful pieces are within the reach of all, where the moral of some natural fact is taught in words of music. Krummacher's Parables also, to which I have already referred, contain several allegories, of which an excellent use may be made by the Sunday school teacher.

In conclusion, I will just repeat, that, to furnish innocent creation and employment to your scholars,—to unfold to them proofs of the power and goodness of their Maker,—to represent to them truth in the form most intelligible and interesting to childhood,—you will find it well to give a portion of your time with your classes to conversations on nature.

LECTURE IX.

Subjects of instruction.—3. The Scriptures.

III. THE scriptures, and more especially the life and words of Jesus, are to be the principal subjects of your instructions. To those pages which contain the revealed will of God, the divine law of duty, and the example of perfect virtue, you are to go yourselves, and to lead your pupils. On this point all are agreed. The Bible is to be the great text-book, the constant manual, the volume of counsel and authority. Whatever other lessons you may give must, as far as possible, be authenticated by appeals to holy writ. Children must be taught to regard it as the fountain of living water, ever pure, ever flowing, ever necessary to the health of the soul. They are to be sent to the Bible for armor in time of temptation, comfort in time of sorrow, and direction in all the relations of life. But how this great object may be best secured, is an important, and in some respects, a difficult question: and one whose thorough discussion, I cannot here undertake. I shall confine myself, therefore, to very brief and general suggestions, as to the

manner in which I would recommend you to proceed.

As a general remark, I would say, teach children the Bible, no farther and no faster than they can understand it. It is a book made up of various kinds of writings: some simple and practical, others difficult and speculative; some plain narratives, others lofty poems; some easy to be comprehended at once, others requiring not a little study and research for their interpretation. They are not all, moreover, suited to the age of childhood, and were never intended to be regarded in the same light, or used without discrimination. The truth of this remark is obvious: and yet a superstitious or rather unreflecting reverence for the sacred volume frequently leaves it out of sight. But be assured, children cannot be interested in, or much profited by what to them is unintelligible; neither are they able to apply, or see the force of those general principles and considerations by which adults explain many passages in the Bible. With the sacred writers, then, you must take the same course, that dictated by common sense, which you would take with other writers; begin with what is simple and proceed gradually to what is more difficult. If, as I believe, much of the neglect with which the Bible is treated in after life, is to be attributed to the injudicious manner in which it is taught us in our early days, I hope the Sunday school will do something to remove the evil by removing its cause; and be the means of raising up teachers who

shall wisely and skilfully introduce the young to such an acquaintance with the sacred oracles, as will secure for them uninterrupted love and reverence.

In the progressive method to which I allude, we may with sufficient accuracy for our present purpose, mark, as it were, three stages.

1. As it regards the youngest classes. I know a lady who rewarded the good behavior of her little daughter, during the week, by allowing her on Sunday afternoon, as her part in a domestic religious service, to read a single verse in the Bible, adapted to her age; and that single verse was to the child, apparently, a matter of as much interest as an attractive story could have been. Thus was a truth presented to the young mind, never probably to be forgotten, and thus were the affections early entwined around some beautiful precept, or promise of the word of God. A practice similar to this might be pursued in our younger classes. Some teachers have already adopted a plan which answers an excellent purpose. They have made little paste-board covers, or portfolios for each of their scholars. On pieces of paper, of a suitable size, they write from week to week, such texts as these, "God is love," "Blessed are the peacemakers," "Children obey your parents," &c. &c. together with verses of hymns, inculcating the same duties, or enforcing the same truths as the texts. One of these papers, after its contents have been explained and illustrated by familiar conversation and examples, is given

to each child to put in her portfolio, every Sunday. The next Sunday the children recite their texts and hymns, and are asked how well they have remembered and obeyed them. This method and its advantages are too plain to need farther explanation. It enables the teacher to consult the capacity, character, and peculiar wants of the children, to give the word of caution, advice, and hope in season, to furnish the memory with sentences that may dwell there and serve as guardian angels in after life. The process moreover, may be carried farther and farther, as circumstances shall render desirable, and thus gradually prepare for the next step, which is,—

2. To use scenes, stories, or parables which are complete in themselves; such, e. g. as "The offering of Isaac," "The Story of Joseph," "Daniel in the Lion's Den," "Jesus in the temple," "The Prodigal Son," "The Good Samaritan," &c. &c. By conversation the pupils may be taught to analyze such passages, examine the conduct of the persons spoken of, and ponder the practical instruction they afford. A like use may be made of the lives of individuals whose history is recorded in the Bible. Perhaps it would be well first to tell the story, or describe the occurrence in our own language, and afterwards to read the account as given in scripture. In this way a large portion of the sacred volume, may be made interesting and profitable to the young, and their minds prepared—

3. To read it as containing the narration of the earlier revelations, and of the introduction and establishment of Christianity. To assist the oldest scholars in this work, an outline of the history of the Jews, their political, moral and social condition, their manners and customs, their expectations and notions in regard to the Messiah, must be given and explained. This done, or whilst doing this, let the gospels be taken up according to some harmony, or as arranged in "The Ministry of Jesus Christ," recently published, and studied as a connected narrative. Make it an object to obtain and communicate a clear view of the design of Christianity, and of the mission of the Saviour as a whole: and endeavor to interpret the several parts with reference to that design. The internal evidence for the truth of our religion growing out of various marks of naturalness, the undesigned coincidences, the peculiarities of character and other features in the evangelical records, should receive attention. In short with the higher classes, the endeavor should be to aid them in reading the Bible, systematically, as a book containing the history of their faith and of those communications which it has pleased the Creator to make to man.

This outline is, I am aware, very meagre and imperfect, and hardly deserves the name even of hints. But to go farther into details would be to exceed my limits. There are a few other suggestions, however, which I will make before concluding.

1. In teaching the scriptures to children, their right to think and judge for themselves, is to be carefully respected. The Sunday school is the last place for dogmatism. Our peculiar views are not to be forced upon our pupils, nor is advantage to be taken of their credulity and docility, to make converts of them to our way of thinking. I do not mean by this that we are never to express decided opinions, or that we are to state all the various interpretations any passage may have received. But I do mean that we are not to talk as if infallible, or as if we were inspired. We are to go with our scholars rather as fellow inquirers, and to set them an example of candor, impartiality, and readiness to receive light from whatever quarter light may come. We shall find by experience little occasion to introduce many controverted topics or to call the young mind prematurely, to the considerations of those questions which divide and set adults in array against each other. Let us then always be on our guard against sectarianism and bigotry. We are not to teach confessions of faith, but to examine the sacred volume. We should be infinitely more anxious to cherish a thirst for simple truth, an inquiring disposition and a profound sense of accountability to God, and to God alone, on the part of the pupils than to enrol them as members of the religious party to which we may belong. Let the Bible speak for itself. Hold up no catechisms of man's make, as a light whereby to read its pages, take no creed to measure therewith the words of

Jesus. It is a grievous wrong, it is a sin, to shut up docile and trusting childhood within the uniform of a sect, or to bind its unresisting soul with the chains of party. Better were it for the world, that Sunday schools should at once be annihilated, than continue, to become drill-houses, and recruiting places for future combatants in theological warfare.

2. In teaching the Bible every opportunity must be taken to give its instruction a practical application to the conscience, the heart, and the conduct. It contains a rule of life, as well as revelations of truth. It has as much to do with the heart as with the head. We are not to rest satisfied with explaining the letter of the sacred volume: but are also to endeavor to unfold and inculcate its spirit. We should dwell much and often on the character of the Savior. Let the tendency of every biblical lesson be to promote right feeling and right action in our pupils. Our business is, not to educate them to be theologians, but to be christians.

3. The Bible is not only to be taught directly, but also to be constantly referred to and kept in remembrance, in the Sunday school. We are to go to it for illustrations, and by the light of its pages explain every duty, and try every motive. Let the sacred volume be used in a cheerful and rational manner. Let it be looked upon with enlightened reverence. Let the principles of common sense be applied in its criticism, and the injunction, "search the Scriptures," obeyed. But as we do this, let it be, so to speak, the

great authority whose voice corroborates and sanctifies all our teachings. Let us unite in the associations of children the word and the works of God, and lead them to look upon the life, character, and words of Jesus as indeed the light of the world, the divine standard whereby all spiritual instruction is to be tested.

Some may think that in this lecture I have assigned a heavy task to the teacher, and be ready to ask, "who is sufficient for these things?" In reply I would remind you of two things. 1st. Whether Sunday school teachers or not, we are bound to study the Bible, and we need to know no more to be instructors, than we ought to know in order to be believers, who can give a reason for their faith, or who wish to discover and walk in the path of duty. 2d. What has been recommended, is not to be done in one day, one month, or one year. As a whole it may look formidable. But instead of pausing in despair at its magnitude, we should go to work at once, assured, that fidelity, perseverance and time, will effect much. The ant, give him time, may rear a mountain.

LECTURE X.

In what respects the teacher should have regard to the good of the whole school.

IN this lecture I shall direct attention to what seems to me a mistake made by some teachers. They have,—not too much, that is impossible,—but too exclusive regard to their own classes and too little reference to their connection with the whole school. It is very natural for them to fix their thoughts almost solely on their immediate charge, and confine their efforts almost entirely to their improvement. Thus each class may become a separate and distinct body, and the school want that harmony which is essential to its good government and the accomplishment of its high design. Teachers must remember, they are not merely to instruct their own scholars, but to instruct them as members of a little community. In some respects the classes may indeed be considered as independent bodies ; but at the same time they must act as parts of a whole, as composing a community, each individual of which is to be mindful of the general good. The teacher is not simply to benefit his

pupils by any measures he may deem advisable. He is to benefit them in the Sunday school and deal with them as portions of that institution. This important fact is, I think, sometimes overlooked, and on that account many schools suffer more or less; they are a disarranged collection of fragments, and not a band well marshalled, moving with regularity and seeking together the common welfare. In such cases individual children are doubtless well attended to; but the school, as a whole, loses somewhat of order, symmetry, and usefulness.

In all communities, larger or smaller, the one must act to some extent at least with reference to the many. Things may be allowed in a hermit, which cannot be allowed in a member of a family. An independent state may conduct its affairs according to its own pleasure; but if it belongs to a confederation, it is bound to remember and consult the prosperity of its associates. Union is strength only when union is perfect. A crowd and an army are very different things; although the former may be actuated by good intentions and all who compose it anxious to accomplish some valuable end. This doctrine is applicable to the Sunday school. The teacher enters it not to work alone, but to work with others; not to pursue his vocation by himself, but side by side with his colleagues; and this consideration is to direct and modify his exertions. I do not mean by this that the teacher is to have no latitude, or that he is only to look

upon himself as a part of a great machine. On the contrary, as I have implied in all my remarks, I would give him an ample field and much liberty ; and it is because I would do so, that I call his attention to the necessity of bearing in mind that there are limits to his freedom, and a mindfulness to be cherished, that he lives not to himself or to his class alone. My object is to keep in view the general principle, that in all social institutions " the body is not one member but many "—a principle, obedience to which is essential to harmony and to success.

If I have but one child to educate, I may take almost any course I please that promises well. I may act in a measure without system, and without general rules. If I have two children to take care of, much latitude still remains, but not so much as when I deal with a single individual. If a class is put under my charge, then I shall be obliged to consult the welfare of each member, only so far as I can do it consistently with the well-being of the majority. And when my class joins a school, most obviously, still farther modifications of my plans will become necessary. This is a plain doctrine and one I should not thus repeatedly state, did I not fear that its importance and its bearings are overlooked in some Sunday schools. But how far is it to be carried? How much reference, you may ask, shall we have to the good of our little community as a whole? These questions I will endeavor to answer in general terms.

1. You are not to think of the whole school, or at least not very much in regard to the actual business of instruction. In this matter each teacher must judge for himself, accommodate himself to the wants and minds and characters of his pupils. Perhaps in no two classes would the same course be wise or beneficial; perhaps no two teachers would be equally happy in putting into execution the same method. As I have already intimated, you are to furnish yourselves for your work and then pursue the path which seems most likely to conduct to good results. You perceive, then, that so far as your chief object is concerned, I would not impose much restraint. Such is the nature of the human soul, that I hold no system of Sunday school instruction, that shall reach the heart or affect the character, and be of universal application, can be fixed. Such systems will be mechanical and produce few if any natural and valuable results. They may indeed give information, but they will not aid the pupils in the building up of character. On the intelligence, virtue and piety of teachers we must after all rely almost entirely; and so far as we have enough of these, of the right kind, so far will a school bring forth the "peaceable fruits of righteousness."

2. But you are to think of your associates and of the whole school in preparing for your work. I shall have more to say on this topic, when I come to speak of teacher's meetings. Fellow-laborers in the same field ought to meet and take

counsel together; they ought to interchange views, be acquainted with each other's plans, cultivate sympathy and unity of feeling, and endeavor mutually to assist each other in studying the great subject of religious education. It would, perhaps, be going too far to lay it down as a rule that no one should enter the Sunday school who cannot meet some times, and not unfrequently with his associates. And yet I am tempted to affirm even thus much. Teachers' meetings seem to me, when rightly conducted, essential to the prosperity of our schools: and no amount of talent, zeal or goodness will wholly supply their place. The work of the teacher is something to be learned. Not at once and not alone can we understand it. Every school will have its peculiarities and each part of it will act upon every other part. Acquaintance, sympathy, and union are therefore to be cultivated by teachers. It is needful to order, that all understand the general arrangements, that all should know their place and the duty assigned them; else, instead of a well-disciplined corps, we shall have broken and irregular ranks, losing force, wasting time, and perplexing each other by their disjointed and eccentric movements. Obviously, then, teachers should meet and seek and cultivate a good degree of fellowship.

3. Another matter, with reference to which teachers should remember that they and their classes belong to a community, is the deportment of their scholars. And on this point it is enough to remark, that nothing should be permitted, in

any class, or any child, which would not be proper if copied by the whole school. Many things children may do, innocent in themselves, and for which, under other circumstances, they need no check, that ought not to be passed over or winked at in the Sunday school. This remark will apply to the tone of voice to be used in conversation, to the manner of sitting or standing, and of going in or out of the church, and to a multitude of like details. The general rule to be adopted, is, I repeat, to permit nothing in any class, which, if imitated by all classes, would be prejudicial to the order and peace of the school. I may be asked here, how shall this desirable state of things be brought about? Shall we *insist* on this regularity of deportment which you advise, even at the risk of offending, possibly of losing some of our pupils? I reply, certainly, and on the principle, which must be obeyed in all social institutions, that the good of the one or few must be sacrificed or made subservient to the good of the many. To reform an individual or very much to lengthen out his term of probation, is not to be done at the expense of that order so necessary to the usefulness of the whole school. But shall we insist upon this regularity at once? I reply, no: not too peremptorily and harshly. Some time may be allowed to gain power over unruly spirits and to secure the affections of hearts not often appealed to. I would not be hasty, although I would be firm and give pupils from the beginning distinctly to understand what will steadily be required. And this may be done in

all kindness and love. Children may be made, by familiar illustrations, to comprehend and feel the importance of this doctrine of order. They have, moreover, a sense of justice that may safely be addressed : and I do not imagine that any influence will be lost by judiciously pressing upon them good behavior as a condition on which they may retain their place. At all events, one thing is perfectly plain, order is absolutely essential to the efficacy of the Sunday school, as a whole, and order must be insisted on.

It cannot be necessary to extend these remarks, nor do I fear they will be misunderstood. I have aimed only to throw out general hints ; their application to particular cases can easily be made. Let no teacher feel under irksome restraint or suppose the Sunday school is a place where his mind is to be cramped or his movements much fettered. But at the same time, let no teacher forget, that he goes not to his labors alone and has no right to pursue solely his own way, without regard to his associates and the good of the institution with which he is connected.

LECTURE XI.

The Library—and the duties of teachers in regard to it.

I will next call your attention to Sunday-school libraries. Whether, on the whole, these are of advantage? what should be their character?—are questions about which there is some difference of opinion, and which deserve serious consideration. My plan will not permit me to discuss them at length. I shall only notice very briefly, the connection of the teacher with the library, and the duties growing out of that connection.

The library is a part, so to speak, of the instrumentality of the school. It is a teacher or rather a collection of teachers. It ought not to be a mere pile of books for the amusement and information of children: but a *Sunday-school* library, having for its primary object the promotion of the same end as the school itself, viz.: the religious culture of the young. This truth is, perhaps, too much neglected. The library is by some regarded as an appendage to the school, designed to render it more attractive—a sort of bait held out to catch, or a kind of reward be-

stowed, for the purpose of keeping scholars. this impression may have a deleterious effect on the formation of libraries, and allow the introduction of unsuitable books. The library, it is true, should, as far as an eye to higher objects will permit, be made interesting, and furnish pleasant employment for leisure hours. But it must not be forgotten that it is an agent in forming the characters of the young, which acts upon them with no little force. A book is sanctified in the minds of the pupils, by being found on its shelves. Care, therefore, should be taken that in this they are not deceived. The literature of the Sunday-school should be negatively, if not positively, good. Its importance cannot be easily overrated. Books, as I said, are teachers. They are acquaintances, companions, friends. They communicate thoughts, excite feelings, teach facts. When we hand a child a volume we are bestowing instruction, as surely as when we talk to him with the living voice; and the volume coming from those he respects, will have a weight and authority it would not otherwise receive. Very much the same principles by which we direct children in the choice of living companions, are to be followed as we introduce them into the world of letters; and hence the importance of having the Sunday-school library a good specimen of the best company. Three or four hundred books circulating among a band of children of different ages, capacities, and characters, are exerting a mighty influence: and the inquiry, in all cases,

what that influence is, should be made and answered with earnest solicitude.

These general remarks show in what light the library is to be regarded. Taking the spirit of them as a guide, I will name the peculiar duties of the teacher in relation to this branch of the economy of the school.

1. Each teacher should cherish a feeling of personal responsibility in regard to the library. He should endeavor to become as thoroughly acquainted, as may be, with its contents; and be on the watch for objectionable books, so that they may be expelled from the shelves. He should look upon himself as one of the guardians of the library, and do all in his power to improve it and make it useful.

2. The teacher should, as far as possible, avoid putting a volume into the hands of his pupils, with whose character and tendency he is unacquainted: lest he give stones or poison, for the bread of intellectual and moral life. Perhaps it would not be going too far to say, he should not introduce a book to the attention of his class, about which he knows nothing, any more than he would recommend to their friendship, a boy or girl, who is to him an utter stranger.

3. The teacher should select the books for each member of his class. I do not mean that he should do this arbitrarily, and without consulting the tastes and wishes of his scholars; but that he should accustom them to look to him for advice in this matter, and to rely on his judg-

ment. That which is most pleasing is not all ways most profitable: and the volume a child prefers may be the very one he ought not to read. For example a boy of much imagination will almost always choose stories and tales, which tend only to increase the action of a faculty already too powerful. The teacher will know what kind of reading will do his several pupils the most good: and, therefore, he should decide for them what books to take from the library, having as much regard to their wishes as he can consistently with the higher object of improving their characters. I know some teachers think this advice hardly practicable. But if it be not practicable in any case, the teacher has not yet obtained that confidence, affection and respect from his class, which is a necessary pre-requisite to success in any of his endeavors. A parent must accustom the child, cheerfully, to yield to his superior knowledge and wisdom—and so must the teacher. Children are to learn, as one of their first lessons, that they come to Sunday-school, not to have their own way, but to be taught the true way. Without faith in those who instruct, instruction will do the young very little service. They are to follow, not to lead. They are to submit to the wisdom of their elder guides, in all things that interfere not with freedom of mind.

4. In carrying out the last suggestion, the teachers should consult the peculiarities of each scholar. A book, harmless or beneficial in one case, may do great injury in another. It is not necessary to illustrate so plain a truth. But let the

teacher ever keep it in mind, and give to each child the volume which he thinks will do that child the most good, having reference to his age, capacity, tastes, situation in life, and such other considerations as indicate the kind of treatment he should receive, in order to favor his moral growth.

5. The teacher should, from time to time, examine his scholars in regard to the books they read; to ascertain what impressions they have received, what knowledge they have gained, and what effects have been wrought on their minds and hearts. This course will often lead to interesting conversations, and afford an opportunity for the communication of much valuable instruction, in a pleasing way, to the class. The library book might occasionally, and with advantage, be made the lesson for the day.

6. I add a suggestion, as to the teacher's responsibility for the treatment of the books. He should see that they are not abused and injured. To use books carefully is a very important matter; and the lesson cannot be too early inculcated or insisted on, that he who values the inside of a volume will respect its outside. I know some teachers, who make for each scholar a little bag or case to contain the library book: thus it is kept clean and whole. The plan is a good one and worthy of being followed.

If, in these suggestions, I may seem to have laid a burthen on teachers, I can only say, that to my mind, an obedience to them, is the only way to make Sunday-school libraries useful.

They had better be given up and scattered to the winds, than kept to be used carelessly, and just as the children please. Some one should be responsible for the library, and see that it does good in its place. Who shall do this if not the teacher?

LECTURE XII.

Teachers' Meetings.

I SHALL now close these lectures with a few remarks on Teachers' Meetings. These I deem most important and necessary to the prosperity and usefulness of the Sunday School. I have already and more than once observed, that on the education of the teachers will depend, in a great measure, the character of the school; and to this I now add, that the teachers' meetings have much to do with the preparation of those who attend them, for their work. They ought to be made interesting and improving; assemblies from which none would willingly be absent, and where weariness and dulness are not known. And yet how frequent are the complaints that they are not thus pleasant and profitable. There seems, in cases not a few, to be much difficulty in knowing how to conduct and give to them the requisite power and value. Where lies the trouble? I reply, so far as I can see, it is mainly owing to indefinite ideas of what these meetings should be, and what are their objects and ends. All feel that something of the kind is needful and may have direct and good influence on the school; and

precisely how they are to be of benefit many do not so clearly perceive. A little thought however, will show plainly for what purposes they are to be held, and what is requisite to render them valuable. They are not meetings for social enjoyment, but meetings for mutual improvement. They are the *Normal school* of the Sunday school; and they should aim to assist the teachers in obtaining the qualifications demanded by their vocation. If the question is asked then, what shall be done at teachers' meetings? I would answer, every-thing and any-thing may be done which will furnish the teachers with whatever they require as religious guides of the young. And what do they require? They require religious knowledge,—an acquaintance with human nature, especially as manifested in childhood,—information concerning the best methods of conducting the business of instruction,—and a sincere, earnest, patient, hopeful spirit. To furnish these things then, should be the design of teachers' meetings. They cannot do this entirely and completely. They cannot supply the place of private study and individual self-culture. They cannot accomplish every thing for teachers. But still they can effect something, and may be made to do much. The exercises at them may be various and conducted in different ways. The examination of scripture, the discussion of questions relating to the philosophy of the mind and heart, and to religious education, the exchange and comparison of the experience of the respective teachers, and such social converse as

may tend to keep alive faith, and zeal, and love, are among the main things demanding attention. That they may receive this attention, teachers' meetings should be frequent, conducted in an easy and cheerful way ; and at them by mutual consent, should the affairs of the school be considered and all plans for its benefit decided. Each teacher should be made to feel, not only that a portion of the labor, but also, so to speak, a voice in the council and government of the school belongs to him. The pastor or superintendent may preside, not always as lecturer, but to preserve order ; and all present should be allowed an equal share in the deliberations. To these general remarks all, probably, will assent. It may be of use, however, to lay down under distinct heads and more in detail the views I entertain on this subject.

I. I think all the teachers should regard their meetings as a part of the school, and feel precisely as much bound to attend them, as they feel bound to attend the school :—and why ? Because to the success of the school there must be a mutual understanding and co-operation among the teachers. It will not answer to have individual teachers act without reference to their fellows. There must be something of system. The exercises in the school must not clash. Some general rules are necessary. Classes are to be managed with care, and various matters attended to which require the aid and the judgment of all the teachers. Now, when is all this to be done ? Not in the school and on Sunday. There is

then no time, and, as all who have had any experience, know it is always, when the season of instruction has come, an interruption, a serious evil, to be obliged to engage in classifying the scholars, in consultations with the teachers, and in making other arrangements. These things ought to be fixed and settled, as far as practicable beforehand, and not brought into the presence of the children. For this reason then, if there were no others, all the teachers, should endeavor to meet together. But there are other reasons. We may venture to say that he who feels no need of the sympathy, counsel and advice of his fellow-laborers, and can see no good in interviews with them, has but an imperfect idea of his office. I do not apply this remark to the numerous faithful teachers who cannot attend teachers' meetings; but to such as feel no inclination to do so. These latter I fear, if there are any such, have very feeble, and narrow, and erroneous conceptions of the design of the Sunday school. It is not simply an opportunity afforded them of meeting a few children, and of endeavouring to teach them. It is an institution having for its object the religious education of the young; as such it should be constantly making progress and all engaged in it constantly seeking their mutual improvement. This they can do to some extent by meeting together, comparing their various experience and interchanging their stocks of information.

II. At the meetings, a portion of the time should be given to arranging the machinery of

the school ; adopting rules and regulations, classifying the scholars, regulating the course of instruction, and such other matters as are essential to the preservation of order and the advancement of the school. This business attended to the teachers should seek next the improvement of their own minds by the discussion of questions relating to the philosophy of the soul and the best methods of instruction. They should all be ready to talk, and expose their ignorance if they have any to expose, communicate their thoughts, if they have any to communicate, and throw even their mites into the common treasury. Besides this, they should, by short and easy steps, go through a course of study. Acquaint themselves with the doctrines of Natural Religion, the Geography of the Holy Land, the Manners and Customs of the East, the Criticism of the New Testament, and all other subjects about which they are to instruct their children. This, formidable as it seems, may be gradually accomplished in time, and give us what the Sunday school needs, not only willing and zealous but also educated teachers. At the meetings of the teachers, the pastor should be present and take a part in a social and familiar way, and give his best coadjutors the benefit of his superior knowledge. Thus understood and thus conducted, the teachers' meetings cannot but exert a happy effect on the school. They will introduce all desirable uniformity in discipline and instruction, produce a harmony of action and feeling among the teachers, and render the whole institu-

tion vigorous in the promotion of its great and good objects. I do not speak too strongly here. The value, and importance, and necessity of well conducted teachers' meeting cannot be overstated, nor the duty of every teacher to attend and aid in increasing their usefulness too strenuously urged. The Sunday school has now become an established institution, and needs to be managed with skill and wisdom in order to answer the expectations raised, and the promises made in its behalf. Much of that skill and wisdom must be created in the teachers' meetings; and on the frequency with which these are held, the mode in which these are conducted, will mainly depend, the right and swift progress, and the real and true value of the effort making in our religious societies for the spiritual culture of the young.

I have now finished these imperfect hints. They have been thrown out in a desultory way; but I would fain hope they have been of some service. To all engaged in Sunday schools, I would say—Go on, calmly, hopefully, zealously, Your work is among the holiest. Your duty is among the highest. Your privileges among the greatest. Falter not. Despair not. Be prudent, but zealous; cautious, but persevering; humble, but faithful. You are, in part training up the future missionaries who are to convert the world. Before you always, is the emblem of the Kingdom of God. You are permitted to enter "the heaven that lies about us in our infancy." Rejoice then in your task.

Carry to it faith and love. Enter upon and continue to discharge it in the philanthropic, disinterested, lowly, trusting spirit of him who went about doing good, and took little children in his arms to bless them and kiss them. Do this and you shall have your reward—in the growing purity of your own souls,—in the grateful affection of posterity, and in the smile of Him who hath commanded us not to despise one of the little ones of his flock, and whose voice comes to you, as it came to the noble-hearted Peter,—“Feed my lambs.”

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